



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MONTHLY



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### Weather Facts

- The best chance to be fatally struck by lightning is before you see the storm as lightning can travel horizontally over six miles
- Although tornados have been reported worldwide, almost all have happened in the United States
- The average flash of lightning will light a 100-watt bulb for more than three months
- During a wild land fire, heated pine needles have been known to explode

### Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are an everyday hazard. We've all seen a thunderstorm, or maybe a large snowstorm before. Many have seen first-hand the true extent of damage weather can cause. Whether it's a tornado, hurricane, or a flood these disasters can cause irreparable harm to many homes and families. Understanding what these natural disasters are and what you can do to prepare for them will protect you and your family.

A thunderstorm is a form of weather characterized by the presence of lightning and are usually accompanied by strong winds, heavy rain and sometimes snow, sleet, hail, or possibly no precipitation at all. A large thunderstorm can cause heavy rainfall which can lead to flooding or damage through lightning strikes and high winds. Perhaps the most visible weather phenomena associated with thunderstorms is lightning. Lightning is a massive electrical discharge during a storm that can travel at speeds of 140,000 mph and get a hot as 54,000 °F. Lightning strikes are common in the local area. If you find yourself caught driving during a storm with hail or severe rain, stop your car. Hail has been known to be strong enough to crack or break windshields, and severe rain can obstruct vision making driving dangerous.

The area surrounding JB MDL experiences the effects of flooding. The local area is very flat, and when heavy rains are encountered the drainage is usually very slow. Listen to the weather ahead of time. When heavy rains are expected (such as when a tropical storm is in the area), you should plan ahead. Take items that you don't want to have water damaged and remove them from basements. Ensure items on the first floor of buildings are lifted as well. Check with the neighbors or with local emergency management to see if you will be renting or buying in a flood prone area. When roads are blocked, don't drive around the barricades. Don't drive through any water that is deeper than the axle of your car. When told to evacuate, follow the routes given by local authorities.

A wildfire is any uncontrolled fire in combustible vegetation that occurs in the countryside or a wilderness area. A wildfire differs from other fires by its extensive size, the speed at which it can spread out from its original source, its potential to change direction unexpectedly, and its ability to jump gaps such as roads, rivers and fire breaks. There have been several such fires in the local area, mostly around the Pinelands are in South Jersey. Monitor local news during these events, evacuations are common during substantially large fires.

Tornados in New Jersey, while uncommon, are possible. They are generally associated with larger storms like a hurricane or thunderstorm, but can develop even during a small storm. Monitor local weather news for tornado watches or warnings. A tornado warning is a 3-5 minute steady siren from the installation giant voice. Take cover immediately to protect yourself and family.

Knowing the local natural disaster threats and what you can do to prepare for them is important. Much more information on these subjects and many more can be found on the JB MDL Emergency Management Community of Practice at <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/community/views/home.aspx?Filter=OO-OT-AM-29>.

### Vehicle Survival Kit

- Have **radio or cell phone** with fresh or charged batteries if stranded
- **Car repair items** such as wrenches, duct tape, tow rope, and even a window punch to break windows in case you need to escape quickly
- Have a **flashlight** with **extra batteries** and **maps or GPS**
- Carry a **first aid kit** with a white distress flag
- Have **bottled water** and **non perishable food** such as granola bars
- Tools such as a small shovel and a Leatherman
- Always have **booster cables, flares, and a tire repair kit**



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